

New home for nuns

Sisters of St. Margaret look to revamp residence

BY SUSANNA SHEEHAN, CLIPPER STAFF
SUSANNA@DUXBURYCLIPPER.COM

This week, the Sisters of St. Margaret presented their plans for a new residence on Harden Hill Road to the Board of Selectmen.

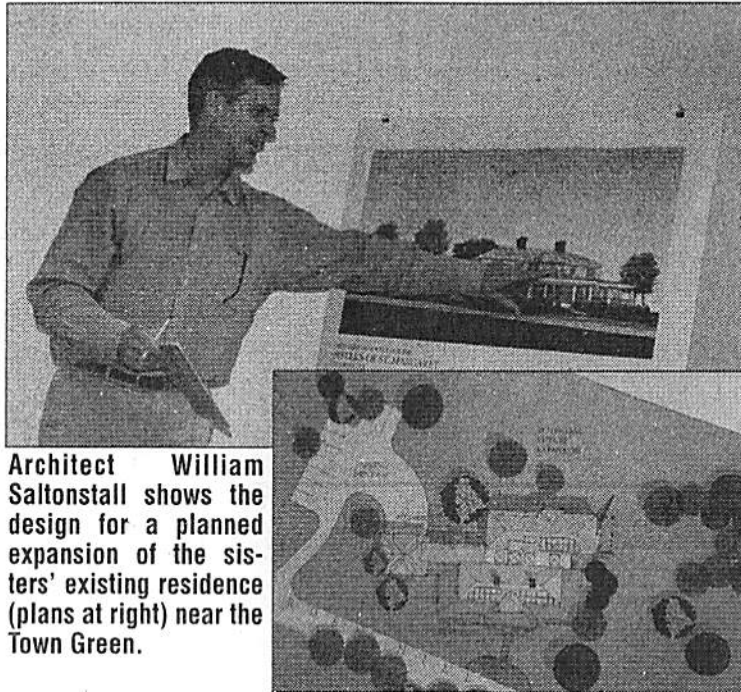
On Monday night, architect William Saltonstall of Saltonstall Architects of Marion explained that the Sisters plan to build a two-story, hip-roofed residence hall that totals 9,500 square feet. It will contain bedroom suites for nine nuns as well as the rooms a usual house would have – a living room and kitchen – but it will also contain a chapel and meeting space.

Also included in the basement are a library and workout space and there will be a three-car attached garage.

The building will be located behind the town green that Duxbury bought from the Sisters in 2001.

The Sisters of St. Margaret is an order of Episcopal nuns. They are preparing to make Duxbury their permanent home, after deciding to sell their convent on Fort Hill in Roxbury. The Sisters have owned the property at the corner of Washington Street and Harden Hill Road since 1903. It contains five buildings including the Bertram Hall conference center, a chapel, a boathouse and a farmhouse.

Saltonstall said he has designed a sustainable, energy efficient building that will be easy for the nuns to maintain. The new residence is in keeping with the other buildings on the property and has been designed to fit with the character of the neighborhood, Sal-



Architect William Saltonstall shows the design for a planned expansion of the sisters' existing residence (plans at right) near the Town Green.

tonstall said, adding that it has been located on the property to take advantage of solar heating and views of the bay. The Sisters also hope to avoid removing mature trees as much as they can during construction.

"I've come to think of this as a new house for a big happy family," Saltonstall said.

Saltonstall said he was very aware of the issue of trying to keep the scale of the building appropriate to the neighborhood so he designed the facility in a way that anyone looking at the building from any direction will only "perceive a certain amount of the mass" at one time.

"It is meant to feel like a residential structure that fits comfortably within the context of the Duxbury neighborhood," he said.

Selectmen Chairman Shawn Dahlen said: "It certainly looks in character with Duxbury."

Once plans are finalized, the Sisters could break ground on their new home this summer. They are also planning to renovate and upgrade the Bertram Conference Center, which turns 100 next year.